

Hi my name is _____ and this is the 8th principle minute. With the adoption of the 8th Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

BIPOC oppression is not unique to the United States. While the American institutionalization of racism in the class system that grew out of the enslavement of African people is unique, the treatment of indigenous peoples in the US is actually more widespread. Three other countries, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, followed the same model of conquest, colonization, and genocide.

The horrors of “Indian Schools” in the US and Canada have been in the news for the last year, and many of us are aware of the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Let us shine a light on Australia for a moment.

January 26th is Australia Day, their national holiday. Unlike Canada Day and July 4th, rather than celebrate independence from Great Britain, Australia Day commemorates the invasion of Australia in 1788. It marks the beginning of the conquest of the Australian continent and the subsequent history of enslavement, violent seizure of land, and genocide, with state sanctioned massacres continuing well into the 20th century.

All forms of oppression are interconnected. There is no hierarchy of oppression. While Australia seems distant, how the two countries treat BIPOC is linked. If we in the US take action to acknowledge our history of oppression, it removes the ability of other countries to defend their inaction by pointing to our country.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.